

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-5. *(canceled)*

6. **(currently amended)** An absorbent article, comprising:

a liquid-permeable topsheet; and

a liquid-absorbent core having an upper surface covered by said topsheet and a lower surface, said core further having indented regions arranged along two lines extending longitudinally along transversely opposite sides of said core, said lines being spaced apart from each other by a distance gradually increasing from a minimum at a longitudinally middle point thereof to a maximum at longitudinally opposite ends thereof, the lines ~~indented regions~~ longitudinally dividing said core into a central region confined between the lines ~~indented regions~~ and two side regions each located between one of the lines ~~indented regions~~ and the respective one of the transversely opposite sides of said core;

wherein

said core comprises a plurality of indentations arranged along said lines, each of said indentations having side walls extending from an opening formed on the upper surface toward the lower surface and ending at a bottom, a portion of said core confined between said bottom and said lower surface defining one of the indented regions; and

said core contains a fibrous component and a density of the fibrous component in the indented regions is lower than in the central and side regions.

7. (previously presented) The article of claim 6, wherein the indented regions continuously extend along said lines.

8. **(currently amended)** An absorbent article, comprising:

a liquid-permeable topsheet; and

a liquid-absorbent core having an upper surface covered by said topsheet and a lower surface, said core further having indented regions arranged along two lines extending longitudinally along transversely opposite sides of said core, said lines being spaced apart from each other by a distance gradually increasing from a minimum at a longitudinally middle point thereof to a maximum at longitudinally opposite ends thereof, the lines longitudinally dividing said core into a central region confined between the lines and two side regions each located between one of the lines and the respective one of the transversely opposite sides of said core;

wherein

said core contains a fibrous component and a density of the fibrous component in the indented regions is lower than in the central and side regions; and

The article of claim 6, wherein the a plurality of said indented regions are arranged at intervals intermittently extend along each of said lines.

9. **(canceled)**

10. **(currently amended)** The article of claim 6, wherein said core further contains super-absorptive polymer particles, said indented regions are devoid of said super-absorptive polymer particles distributed only in the central region.

11. **(canceled)**

12. **(currently amended)** The article of claim [[11]] 6, wherein a distance between the

side walls decreases from the opening toward the bottom.

13. **(currently amended)** The article of claim [[11]] 8, wherein said core comprises a plurality of indentations arranged along each of said lines, each of said indentations having side walls extending from an opening formed on the upper surface toward the lower surface and ending at a bottom, a portion of said core confined between said bottom and said lower surface defining one of the indented regions; and ~~the openings of the indentations arranged successively along~~ for each of said lines, ~~the openings of the indentations arranged along said line~~ are spaced from each other.

81 14. **(currently amended)** The article of claim [[11]] 6, wherein the openings of the indentations arranged successively along each of said lines are contiguous so that to form at least two grooves each extending along one of said lines.

15. (previously presented) The article of claim 14, wherein each of the grooves extends for substantially an entire length of the respective line.

16. (previously presented) The article of claim 15, wherein the grooves intersect in a vicinity of the longitudinally middle point of said lines.

17. (previously presented) The article of claim 14, wherein a depth of at least one of the grooves gradually decreases from the longitudinally middle point of the respective line toward the longitudinally opposite ends thereof.

18. **(currently amended)** The article of claim [[11]] 6, wherein said topsheet includes a plurality of ~~indented~~ portions each being conforming in shape with one of the indentations and received within a space defined by the side walls and bottom of one of the ~~respective indentation~~

indentations, wherein said portion of said topsheet extends continuously within said space and includes at least a first section extending from the opening toward the bottom along one of the side walls, a second section extending from the bottom toward the opening along the other side wall, and a third section located between, contiguous to and connecting the first and second sections.

19. **(currently amended)** The article of claim [[11]] 6, wherein said topsheet spans over the openings of the indentations without being partially received within spaces defined by the side walls and bottoms of the indentations.

20. (previously presented) The article of claim 6, wherein said lines intersect in a vicinity of the longitudinally middle point thereof.

21. **(currently amended)** The article of claim 6, wherein at least one of the side regions of said core has a thickness gradually decreasing from the respective ~~intended~~ one of the indented regions toward the respective one of the transversely opposite sides of said core.

22. (previously presented) The article of claim 6, wherein the central and side regions of said core have substantially the same thickness.

23. (previously presented) The article of claim 6, further comprising a liquid-impermeable backsheet covering the lower surface of said core and bonded to said topsheet.

24. **(new)** The article of claim 6, wherein an entirety of said core is made of a fibrous material defining said fibrous component.

25. **(new)** The article of claim 8, wherein an entirety of said core is made of a fibrous material defining said fibrous component.

26. **(new)** The article of claim 8, wherein said core further contains super-absorptive polymer particles, said indented regions are devoid of said super-absorptive polymer particles.

27. **(new)** The article of claim 6, wherein a minimum thickness of said core in said central region is not lower than a maximum thickness of said core in the indented regions and side regions.